

A He Thing or A She Thing  
A He thing or a She Thing?  
An adventure with the Second Doctor\*  
By Theresa Meyers

\*Note: This adventure takes place shortly after The Prison In Space, a lost episode. The Doctor, Jamie and Zoe are just returning after things are sorted out on the planet. I have given the name Gynion to the planet to make references easier for the reader.

## Part One: Openings and Closings

Jamie and Zoe wearily trudged into the TARDIS console room. After the two children trotted the Doctor, sickeningly jubilant. "Och, how can he be so cheerful after what we went thru?" snapped Jamie, irritably. "Just because you're a wet blanket doesn't mean he has to be, Jamie.ö "Wet blanket, me? Nau jest a minnit!ö "I think all of us need some rest and relaxation,ö said the Doctor quickly, stepping between his two young companions. Like some traffic conductor, he stood with both arms extended. "There he goes again,ö complained Jamie. "As soon as he sets off for some vacation, we're in it up to our necks!ö "Surely you can get it right this time, Doctor?ö said Zoe, hands on her hips. Ignoring them, the Doctor rubbed his hands together. Began to punch keys on the coordinate programmer. "Stand by for transference,ö he announced. In one hand he grabbed two demat levers, and edged them back. Simultaneously he edged the last one forward with his other hand. Instinctively, Jamie grabbed the console. Gritted his teeth. Zoe shook her head, and still rested her hands on her hips. The TARDIS coughed and banged. Wheezed itself into the fifth dimension with some protest. Zoe found herself groping at anything as she was thrown

backwards. Jamie happened to be the most convenient solid object. As she shot

past, he felt her grab onto his vest. With her momentum she pulled him backwards with her. Both of them landed smack on their backsides.

"Watch it nau,ö he snapped.

"What is it with you?ö demanded she. "YouÆve been treating me like some sort of

enemy ever since we left!ö

"Me? ItÆs ye whoÆs the queen of the maclarties lately!ö

"Quiet!ö shouted the Doctor, throwing up his hands. His large coat sleeves slid

down to his elbows. "ThatÆs it! IÆve had enough!ö

Zoe and Jamie stared at the Doctor in surprise. Normally he didnÆt yell at

people when he would break up arguments. Slowly, Jamie got up, and helped Zoe

to her feet this time.

"Thank you,ö he said, becoming calm once more. Smiling ruefully he folded his

hands, pressing them to his mouth. Silence fell amongst the trio. For a few

seconds Jamie and Zoe watched the column rise and fall. It was almost hypnotic.

"I can see thereÆs more going on here than I expected,ö he said more to himself

than to his two companions. Silently they glowered at each other. He could

sense the waves of hostility radiating between them. "Oh, dear me. This is not

good.ö

Neither youth talked to each other when the TARDIS landed. It had been a

torturous few minutes for the Doctor. Anything he said might catapult Zoe and

Jamie into some argument or another. "Talk about being diametrically opposed,ö

he muttered.

So intently they were ignoring each other that they didnÆt see the Doctor

rounding the console. Neither knew what those two circular panels were for.

They just assumed it was some device vital to running the TARDIS.

He had heard something in the back of his mind. Felt a strange shiver that went

past the boundary between conscious and subconscious thought.

Absently heÆd

tied a knot in one of his coattail. His baggy jacket was clearly several sizes

too large, but he loved the multitude of pockets to stash things in. What compelled him to choose these particular coordinates over any other? To tell himself the truth, he just punched them in randomly. So distracted as he was by Jamie and ZoeÆs bickering. As he checked the coordinates and atmospheric readings, he paged through his 500-year diary. "Planet Delta Draconic four. Hmm. Says here that a small band of humans attempted to colonize there, but were unsuccessful. CanÆt help but wonder why.ö "Er, we seem to have landed, if anybodyÆs interested,ö he announced. Silence melted his cheerful comic face into a frown. "Ahem!ö "IÆm not going anywhere, if sheÆs cominÆ along,ö said Jamie, stubbornly. He poked a thumb in ZoeÆs general direction. "YouÆd be crazy if you think IÆm going anywhere with that simian primitive,ö she snapped, equally angry. "Oh, is that so?ö asked the Doctor. Slowly he walked around Zoe, glancing her from head to toe. Face set into an indifference pose, she turned her back to Jamie. "You know what I see here?ö Then he crossed the room, circling Jamie. With sharp eyes the young Highlander followed the DoctorÆs path. "Dissent. A failure to communicate. Could be very unpleasant, you know.ö "Aye. She dosnae listen to a word I say,ö agreed Jamie. "ThatÆs not true,ö she spat back, looking over one shoulder. "Sounds as if she heard you just now, Jamie,ö the Doctor pointed out. He stood close to his old friend, his head only inches from JamieÆs left shoulder. "I think it would be wise if you both stopped talking, and started listening to what the other has to say.ö "But Doctor, sheÆs being impossible . . .ö The Doctor shook his head. "The first step to successful communication is, well, making the first step. Think about it, if thatÆs not too much to ask.ö He winced at the DoctorÆs verbal jab. Tucking hands into his belt, he sauntered over to the hallway. "Well, I donÆt know about you two, but IÆm going to look round

outside,ö said

the Doctor, cheerfully.

“IÆm not going anywhere with him,ö she repeated, sitting in the ornately carved

Louis XVI chair.

“Fine,ö said the Doctor, coming close to her now. “You both can stay here

inside the TARDIS until you work out your differences.ö

“But Doctor, surely . . . ö

“Ah, Zoe, IÆm not playing games. I am quite serious.ö

He turned to the console. Beside the door switch, he pressed a few buttons.

“Whatever are you doing?ö asked Zoe. Curiosity overided her sulking.

“Setting the door controls. ThereÆs a special option for infrared identification. ItÆs a security measure. It opens the door for whatever pattern of heat I intend it to.ö

“IÆve never seen that before.ö

“Say for instance that someone managed to break into the TARDIS. Once I set the

program to only open for a distinctive heat pattern, the door would simply not

open for this particular person. When you first came on board, the TARDIS took

readings of your life signs. And stored them in its Data Bank.ö

“By setting this switch here,ö and here he flipped on a switch.

“And this one here,ö he said, pressing another button beside it. “I can set

the doors to only open if the TARDIS sensors detect your heat pattern.ö

“How interesting. An infrared security detector.ö

“Why did you never use it before?ö broke in Jamie. Just his head and shoulders

slipped from behind the door that led to the rest of the TARDIS. HeÆd decided

leaving the Console room was not as exciting as heÆd thought.

“IÆve never had the need to,ö he answered simply, looking over his shoulder.

“Until now.ö

Jamie glanced at Zoe, shrugging. She glanced back, still perplexed.

“ItÆs

activated now. From the inside,ö she realized, finger resting on the indicator.

“I thought it functioned usually to keep people out.ö

Realizing he was paying attention to her, the Highlander quickly turned away.

He dissapeared through the closing door, and left Zoe and the Doctor still stood

side-by side at the console.

“Now IÆm going to have a look round. You two are quite welcome to join me. But

thereÆs one catch.ö

“What?ö asked Zoe.

“You both must exit the doors at the same exact moment. Both you and Jamie

together. Only the combination of your two heat patterns will open the door,

from the inside.ö

“Wait a minute!ö Zoe protested, reaching out for his coat sleeve.

Nimble he dodged her grasp, and hit the door switch. Hearing the noise, Jamie

sprang into the room. Both he and Zoe watched the Doctor skip through the

rapidly opening doors.

Already he stood outside the TARDIS. A fresh wind blew into the Console room,

washing out the stuffiness inside. “Looks quite pleasant.ö

“If you think yuir going out there without me,ö said Jamie, dashing across the

floor. “Yuir daft!ö

Zoe stayed beside the console, adamantly keeping her distance from the Scot.

Immediately the doors swung shut.

“Wait jest a minnit!ö snapped the Highlander, jumping back before he smashed his

nose in the shutting doors. “Hey, let us out of here!ö Futilely he banged on

the doors. They refused to open.

“ItÆs not good, Jamie,ö laughed Zoe. “HeÆs not going to open them.ö

“Dinna be daft! I know where the switch is,ö he snorted, marching over to the

hexagon console. His hands immediately found the right switch. Flipped it.

Nothing happened.

Zoe switched on the scanner. They could see the Doctor, waving to them.

“Incidentally,ö came his voice over the speaker. “I would suggest you two solve

your little differences and come outside. ItÆs rather exciting.ö

“DonÆt be ridiculous, Doctor,ö said Zoe. “You canÆt expect us to stay cooped up

in here!ö

His only response to her was a cheerful smile. Over the scanner screen.

“Doctor, open this door!ö she shouted.

“ItÆs no guid, lass,ö said Jamie irritably. “He cannae hear you outside.ö

“What a mean, rotten trick,ö she snapped. Frustrated, she slammed her fist down

on the console. “Of all the underhanded, low-down . . .ö

“WhatÆre ye on about nau?ö

“HeÆs locked us in here on purpose. The only means of egress for you

or I, is  
for us to leave simultaneously!ö  
“ThaÆs what he told me, in English, mind you.ö

Part Two: Under scrutiny

“Look, I told you I donÆt remember anything after they put me into that correction chamber.ö

“Oh, aye. ThatÆs convenient! You werenÆt locked up in a cell. All they did

was put ye in school!ö

Highlander and astrophysicist fumed at each other. Short dark hair swirling

around her head, Zoe turned on him. Sterile white lights glared off her plastic

outfit. Still, she was clad in that crazy miniskirt and jacket with the scallop

pattern border.

Jamie combed fingers violently through his straight, brown hair. He clenched

and unclenched his fists at his sides. Warily, hazel eyes fixed on the young

woman.

“Do you think I enjoyed that beastly place?ö asked Zoe, circling the room.

“It

was all I could do to persuade those instructors that I wasn’t mad.ö

“Did a guid job oÆ that didnÆt ye?ö

“For your information, Jamie, I had them convinced that being feminine was in

fact not a crime.ö

“Jest be glad you didnae ha to put on one of those daft dolly-guard outfits! It

was absolutely ridiculous!ö

Zoe covered her mouth, dimples betraying her amusement. “The Doctor told me all

about that,ö she giggled. “I bet you looked cute. Sewn into a miniskirt that

was a bit shorter than usual for you.ö

Mouth dropping open, Jamie glared at her. “Come on now!ö he groaned.

“How

many times do I have to tell ye? ItÆs no a skirt IÆm wearing! ItÆs a kilt!ö

“Sorry,ö she said, trying to stop laughing at the mental image of him in a mini-skirt and spandex. She looked so smug with those sickeningly cute dimples

in her cherubic cheeks.

“And well ye shuld be,ö he nodded, warily crossing over to the far end of the

console room. “After what we went thru to get you out of there.ö

“What does our last adventure have to do with what we just came

through?ö

"If the Doctor hadna insisted on stopping by the capital to check on the men . .

.ö

"But he had to make certain things were under control on Gynion.

Reversing

years of rule by women takes a while, you know.ö

"Aye.ö

"Why those men were scared of those women running after them. It took quite a

spot of sociology to put them right now.ö

"What? Men chasing after the women instead of women chasin after the men? Like

thatÆs a big improvement.ö

"Oh, of course not. The main idea is to get them to socially interact through a

controlled set of social norms. Like courtship and moonlight, gazing into each

otherÆs eyes, billet-deux . . .ö

"Billet-deux?ö

"You know. Love letters.ö Still he looked blankly at her. "Amorous admiration

of the opposite sex, from afar.ö

"There were plenty of the other sex glancing at ye right enau!ö

"Why, Jamie,ö she smiled. "I do believe, youÆre jealous.ö

"DonÆt be ridiculous. Jealous of what?ö

"You are jealous. ItÆs a typical human response to deny jealousy, when one is

in fact guilty of it.ö

"Is that more oÆ yuir fancy education?ö he asked, thrusting hands into his thick

leather belt. The beautiful silver buckle was well framed by the vest hanging

from his shoulders.

"My fancy education has gotten us out of quite a lot of fixes, Mister McCrimmon,ö she retorted. "You were jealous about me paying more attention to

those men on Gynion than you.ö

"Now what do I ha to be jealous of?ö he wondered, raising his eyebrows.

"Of a

bunch oÆ lads looking at a lass? Tha happens all the time.ö

"Case in point. I pay attention to you, and you push me away.ö

"Wha are ye talking about?ö

"Surely you must know. A few minutes back there, you wouldnÆt even look me in

the face. And whenever IÆd open my mouth, youÆd snap at me.ö

"Aye, well, I suppose I am a bit angry, yes.ö

"See.ö

"You and yuir self righteousness! Honestly, do ye always have to be

right?ö

"ItÆs my job to be correct. At least back on Space Station XL7J833 it was. IÆm

a scientist, after all.ö

"Well, in case ye hadnae noticed, weÆre no on that space wheel thing any more!ö

"Oh, what a brilliant observation,ö she snapped, throwing up her hands.

"Do you

have any more urgent facts to relate to me?ö

"There ye go again! Saying IÆm stupid. Because IÆm no from yuir time!ö

"I never said that!ö

"Yuir jest like the Doctor. They all treat me like IÆm an idjit!ö he snapped.

To punctuate each syllable, he stabbed the air with his index finger.

"Because

IÆve niver seen electronic gizmos in my ain time! But IÆll tell ye, at least I

know how to enjoy living!ö

"Okay, okay,ö sighed Zoe. "Maybe I seemed like I was putting on a superior act.

But I never recall saying youÆre stupid! Not at all.ö

"So prove tÆ me, then. Give me a couple oÆ reasons then, in yuir scientific

opinion, that IÆm jest as capable as ye in a disaster.ö

"You, er . . .ö she began, then blanked.

"Well?ö

"Give me a moment.ö

"See,ö he spat. Pointed at her. "You think IÆm an idjit. Because I cannae

understand yuir math and science.ö

The memories of their previous adventure still rang painfully close. Of a female dominated world where men were considered little more than breeding

stock. Jaime and the Doctor managed to break out of the male holding compound

just in time, to rescue Zoe, who was being 'reeducated' by the dominant females.

Just as they took her from the learning center, she had betrayed them with her

cries. Desperately she fought against the two men she once considered allies.

They had spirited her to the TARDIS, just as the leader of the males reached the

re-education center, and reversed the devices of obedience, which enslaved them

to the females. Jaime and the Doctor bodily dragged Zoe with them, despoaring

the reducation would never be reversed. Finally when the men and



women were convinced to at least start negotiations, after a coup, they stole away. Zoe's conditioning continued just as strongly. Only when Jaime finally was fed up with her screaming, he bent her over his knee and gave her a stern spanking. The doctor was shocked, but the neanderthalic shock seemed to reverse the hypnosis, and Zoe seemed her old self. Except she was much more petulant. As she was lately. They stood on opposite sides of the Console room, backs turned to each other. It just may well have been a chasm. Zoe bit her nails. Jamie was being sarcastic, and abrasive. But he had a point. Perhaps she had been underestimating him lately. At that moment Zoe began to remember the many times Jamie had pulled them out of trouble. Like the time on Dulkis when he had the idea of tunneling to catch the atomic seed device. Or when he bulldozed a Quark with nothing more than a couple of rocks. She had to admit he was brave. Did the best with what resources were available. Even when he sprayed plastic all over a laser gun, and just happened to disable it. By pure chance. To stop the Space Wheel from blowing up a rocket where the Doctor landed the TARDIS. That did happen long ago, back on her beloved space station. Where she first met the Doctor and Jamie. It seemed so far removed from her in space and time, like a dream that melts away when a person wakes. Would she ever get back? Right now she could hardly care. Leo Ryan snapped at her one time, when the Cybermen attacked. What was it he said? That she was nothing but a thinking machine, incapable of emotion. She felt so guilty when the meteors tumbled toward the incapacitated space station, and she couldn't predict what to do. For all her advanced education, she was incapable of living a real life. Equations and physics could not prepare her for random whims of fate. She remembered sitting there at her desk, gloomy.

Jamie had stood over her, assuring her that sheÆd be all right. That she was dealing with the situation in the best way she knew how. He was right. Oh, was he ever right, and she hated him for it. How was she to know what to think? In her adventures with the Doctor, sheÆd felt more emotion than sheÆd felt in her whole life. SheÆd been scared, sad, happy, elated. A whole spectrum of emotions was buried far beneath fact. Faintly the hum of the TARDIS penetrated her silent introspection. She turned to Jamie, who was staring up at the scanner screen. When he was angry, heÆd sulk. Or heÆd pretend to ignore her. That was so typical of him. How could someone, who was close to her age, be so different from her? He wasnÆt from her time. No more than she was from his. Fighting was a way of life to the Highlander. It wasnÆt to her. Neither was having him leap to her rescue when she was in danger. How primitive and sexist this seemed. Yet, how flattering, at the same time. She had witnessed the product of ultra-feminism, back on Gynion. To the point where men were excluded from society. It was just as unbearable as male dominated societies on Earth. Reverse discrimination, she recalled. "Jamie, what IÆm trying to tell you," Zoe began. "Is that youÆre right?" "Is that so?" he grunted. Quietly she approached him. "I admit, IÆve got no right to judge you. And I suppose I do treat you like youÆre less than capable." "Aye, well thatÆs no real surprise. After all, you are from that huge space station nÆ all." "I had to learn quite a lot of technology to be able to cope on that station. With the rigors of my career . . ." "What, with machines that ring up water like magic? Have ye ever been wiÆout food and drink fer days on end, in the middle of a war?" "But I have been scared for my life, Jamie," she countered. "And since IÆve traveled with you and the Doctor, IÆve learned what itÆs like to truly live." Jamie turned his head to look at her. Gone were the hard lines of computer brilliance. Those intelligent brown eyes looked vulnerable. It was a

strange transformation. HeÆd seen Zoe like this before, when she was faced with something she couldnÆt explain. She was afraid. Her veneer was cracking. "IÆm sorry, Jamie. IÆll not make that mistake again.ö

"Aye. Well, thank you,ö he said, looking down at his boots. Not looking right at her.

"I just donÆt understand you,ö she said, resting a hand on her hip.

"Now you wonÆt even look at me.ö

"What do ye expect me to say? You said yuir sorry, an I accept it. So what else are ye expectin me tÆ say?ö

"ItÆs . . . nothing,ö she said, turning away. Both of them now stood close to the Console, the only neutral territory in the chamber.

"You women,ö he sighed. "Can never understand what yuir thinking. Ye expect me to say and do things I dinna even ken what yuir talking about.ö

"Oh, honestly, why do I bother?ö she sighed to herself. Black lashed eyes shut, frustrated. Confront them honestly, and they turn to mush. Try to hint to them, and they stare at you dumbfounded. Zoe frowned, running her hand along the edge of one control panel. Felt an aching inside her. Something sheÆd ignored long before. All the arguing, and the bickering became pointless. It was just a smokescreen.

"There you go again,ö she snapped, turning to him once again. "Making these sweeping generalizations about women. What do you know that I donÆt about women? ThatÆs the trouble with men. You think you have to figure us out all the time.ö

"ThatÆs because you drive us daft,ö he explained.

"Let me explain something to you,ö she said, grabbing his arm. "WeÆre not talking about just men and women in general. We really are talking about you and me. YouÆre from the past, IÆm from the future. We just donÆt jive because of the time difference. And no, this isnÆt more of my fancy education, James Robert McCrimmon.ö

"Well, Zoe Herriott,ö he countered. "What

do we  
have in common?ö  
“WeÆre human beings, both out of our own times. And we both made  
the decision  
to stick with the Doctor.ö  
“Aye well. ThaÆs sensible enau.ö  
He folded his arms across his chest. His sturdy MacLaren kilt, seemed so  
strange in the ultra modern control room. That button-up canvas shirt he  
wore,  
with the striped cravat wrapped around his bare neck, made him look  
remotely  
like a boy scout. Everything about Jamie was an anachronism.  
“I wonder whatÆs keeping the Doctor,ö he murmured, glancing up at the  
scanner  
screen again. “Why hasnae he come back?ö  
“YouÆre right. HeÆs been away for a while, hasnÆt he.ö  
“Jest a few minutes he said,ö sighed Jamie, clenching his jaw and biting  
his  
bottom lip. “I donÆt like it.ö  
Zoe took his wrist and looked at his watch. “ItÆs been nearly two hours.  
Surely it canÆt take that long to talk to a Time Lord.ö  
“Sh!ö he hissed, lifting his hand. His eyebrows lowered, and he  
concentrated.  
“What?ö  
“Do you no hear it, Zoe?ö  
“Hear what?ö she asked.  
“A strange sort of noise . . . in the background.ö  
“All I hear is the TARDIS,ö she began. “No wait. I . . . ItÆs too difficult  
to make out.ö  
“Close yuir eyes, and concentrate,ö he said. “Mebbe we can both tell  
what it is  
if we block everything else out.ö  
Both of them shut their eyes. Zoe attenuated all thoughts to her hearing.  
She  
could do that, by partitioning her mind to concentrate on one sense to  
expand  
her perception. Jamie knew this, without having attended an Enhanced  
Perception  
class at the Parapsychic Institute. What other things did he know that  
she did?  
“Stop it, Zoe,ö she scolded herself. “Must concentrate on the noises in  
the  
room.ö Yes, there was the humming of the TARDIS. And the faint  
hissing of the  
nerves firing in her brain. She struggled to listen beyond the room. A  
strange  
throb seemed to rise all around her. It was just under the range of her  
hearing, a low frequency sound. Perhaps JamieÆs senses were sharper  
than hers.

In the future there were tape recorders and video cameras to capture such images. After all, he was from a time when hearing and sight were a necessity.

On a battlefield with Redcoat soldiers, listening for the slightest sounds through the mist.

Just the tiniest bit she opened one eye. She glimpsed Jamie, leaning with his

back against the TARDIS console. Eyes were closely pressed shut, as he concentrated. Somehow he must be sorting through all the sounds in his perception.

"Like some sort of a low sound . . . not a high-pitched one," he muttered.

"Sound natural or manmade?" she asked, standing right in front of him.

"I dinna ken."

"A voice?"

"No."

"A nuclear pulse generator perhaps?"

"What?"

She scolded herself for forgetting to speak in ways he could understand.

"Like

thunder?"

"Aye, like thunder. Very low. Can't quite-- ah yes. A sort of rumbling.

That keeps repeating over and over. Almost like someone--. och no,

that's

daft."

"What?"

"Like someone talking, really low. At a really slow speed."

"What do you mean?"

"Ye know, when ye run one of them tape recorder things really slow. And the

words are low and slurred together. That's what this sounds like. If I

can

just make out the words--"

So intently he stood there. Zoe moved closer, studying his face. That

strong

sturdy jaw clenched as he listened. His freckled skin looked slightly

blotched

under the bright TARDIS lights. It was now so quiet she could hear

her own rumbling in her ears. Even the TARDIS humming couldn't drown out the

strange eerie noise. Something was outside the ship, something large and

frightening. Jamie had somehow evaluated a tangible explanation for the rumbling. With his scant knowledge of technology. Seeing him there, so closely concentrating, made Zoe feel nervous. After all, he usually had a good

sense for danger.

Grinning to herself, she forced away the fears. Fear was irrational. Zoe

tried  
to focus on tangible objects. Around her were the high walls of the  
TARDIS,  
solid and steady. Hard to believe they were compressed into an outer  
volume  
just the size of a few square meters. Circuits flickered and chattered to  
themselves in electronic lingo. Yes, this was real enough.  
Just beneath the rumbling she heard it. A slow garbled rush, almost  
unintelligible at first. Yet the more she concentrated, the more she could  
hear. Till the moaning burble eerily echoed somewhere outside.  
Ever so silently she moved closer to the young Scot, and reached out.  
He  
didn't even flinch when she grasped hold of his striped scarf. Easy  
enough, for  
he always left the ends, thrust through a silver ring, dangling well down  
his  
chest. Nor did he stop to notice Zoe standing on her tiptoes to reach  
him.  
Height was annoying. She was shorter than Jamie or the Doctor, by  
about five  
inches. Both of them were well under six feet high. Giggling to herself,  
Zoe  
slid her left arm around his neck. She felt the blood pounding behind her  
ears,  
and her nerves firing in rapid succession.  
"Eh, what's this . . . " was all he could choke out before she cut him off.  
Hot blood rushed to his cheeks, and he shivered. Small arms gripped  
around his  
neck with surprising strength. His first impulse was that she was trying  
to  
strangle him. But how on earth could you strangle somebody by just  
muffling  
their mouth with your face? No one smothered their breath like this? By  
the  
time he blinked, he had a living, breathing woman in his arms. Was this  
really  
how they kissed in her time, perhaps?  
She strained to reach him. Even though he leaned with his back against  
the  
edge of the Tardis Console. Slowly and rhythmically she moved her  
head from  
side to side. So softly she touched him; it was almost tender.  
Nevertheless, he  
could feel her slender body trembling. Instinctively, Jamie stopped trying  
to  
tear her from his grasp, and relaxed. He was sure his own knees were  
shaking.  
This couldn't be quite right, after all. Should she be doing this to him?  
Part

of him didn't care. He'd only been kissed like this once. And the sensible side of the Highlander was screaming to quit. It wasn't proper. She was just his friend, after all. Ah well, he wasn't about to complain. Funny how she insisted on opening her mouth and grasping him so tightly, as if he'd disappear. He found himself slowly trace his hand down the curve of her back. He immersed his fingers in her straight, black hair. This daft lassie from some future time was incredibly attractive. Why had he never realized this before?

"I did hear what you described," she gasped, voice low. Only inches from his nose, her brown eyes looked nervously up at him. Still, she gripped his shoulders. Jamie was still trying to take in what just happened.

"Aye, I told ye it was someone's voice." His strong arms tightened around her waist protectively. Usually he held her protectively when both were faced with an unknown danger. However, this time the contact felt different. They held each other now-- front to front-- and wondered what the next moment would bring.

Smooth thighs and hips pressed up against his kilt. Any minute he expected her to smack him in the face. Push him away and accuse him of being daft.

"Jamie," she whispered, looking up into his eyes.

"Yes, Zoe?" he answered.

"I heart it too. A low voice like a tape running at a slow speed," she whispered.

"Dinnae worry," he said, struggling to steady his shaking voice. That rumbling shot through his head. Inside his chest he could feel his heart racing. Zoe shivered, still wrapped in his arms. Her brown eyes flicked back and forth in the silent room. Against his shirt he felt her heart pounding faster than his.

"But there was yet another noise, that's overtop of the rumbling."

"Aye."

"Someone's out there, singing . . ."

"That's no what I hear," he said.

"I'm talking about that singing, off key."

"Singing, off key?" he repeated. The TARDIS doors began to swing open. Both teenagers jumped apart. Zoe turned away, hiding her face. Jamie gasped, trying to catch his breath.

Cheerfully the Doctor waltzed into the Console Room. Jet black hair was fringed slightly out of place. "Ah, Jamie, Zoe!" he said. "Ready to leave now?" Jamie still stood there, stunned. Next to the console, he clutched its side for support. Pushing her bobbed hair behind her ears, Zoe started to rub her temples. She looked a bit wobbly on her feet. "Zoe, wait," he spluttered, reaching out one hand to her as she stumbled away. As she walked past the Doctor, she tripped. "Sorry Doctor," she murmured, catching hold of the front of his jacket. "But IÆve not been feeling quite well, lately." "Come to think of it, you look a bit peaky," said the Doctor, eyebrows knitting in concern. Briefly he glanced at her, gripping her arms to support her. "Why donÆt you go lie down, my dear? IÆll fill you in later." Zoe exited, hands to her head. "What happened out there, Doctor?" Jamie managed to ask. "I heard this strange voice." "Just a spot of negotiations. No need for you two to bother about. But weÆre off." "Just like that?" Jamie asked, as the Doctor crossed over to the console. He closed the doors, and started throwing switches. "You may have heard the voice of to whom I was talking," said the Doctor. "Pleasant enough chaps, the Gantruar. Just had a friendly chat with them." "But ye were gone so long we were worried, sick. And thatÆs a lot longer than jest having a word or two with someone." "The Gantruar with which I spoke are rather large, Jamie." "I imagined they must be giants." "Precisely one hundred feet high, and massive. In the time it takes for one to say one word, a human would stand around waiting when to reply." "I thought they sounded like thunder. I was right." "Rather difficult to hold a long conversation with them," sighed the Doctor. "But no problem to a Time Lord." "So yer saying that whoever made the mistake oÆ messing with them didnae take the time to talk with them?" "They didnÆt even realize that they were being spoken to, Jamie. As far



as they  
were concerned, the planet was becoming dangerously geologically  
active. In  
this case, the phenomenon was far from volcanic in origin.ö  
“So where to now, Doctor?ö Jamie asked. Hands thrust in his leather  
vest  
pockets, he looked over the DoctorÆs shoulder. Still, he was punching  
keys.  
Strangely they had not yet dematerialized.  
“Off for rest and relaxation. By the look of Zoe, she probably could use a  
vacation.ö  
“Aye,ö mumbled Jamie. Looking at the figures flickering across the  
digital  
display didnÆt make him any wiser. Just a lot of strange numbers to  
him. It  
might as well be in Greek.  
“By the way, nice lipstick,ö said the Doctor, casually. “Crystal rose, I  
believe?ö  
“Eh, what?ö Jamie spluttered, wiping away at his lips with the tip of his  
cravat. Those pink stains looked suspicious.

On they hurtled through the Vortex. Leaving the Gantruar far behind on  
their  
planet, where a colony of humans was struggling to survive.  
Jamie was still stunned. She had kissed him. She, Zoe Herriott--the  
logical  
calculating scientist-- had kissed him. He didnÆt know whether to be  
scared or  
flattered. Surely she was just playing a joke.  
Not a word had been exchanged between them since. SheÆd been in  
bed, with some  
sort of a sickness that the Doctor couldnÆt explain. For nearly an hour  
sheÆd  
slipped into a deep sleep. Jamie was the one who usually fell asleep  
whenever  
the opportunity presented itself.  
As usual, the Doctor didnÆt say where they were going. He sat  
cross-legged on a  
chaise lounge. His nimble fingers moved up and down on the holes  
drilled in his  
striped recorder. Jamie lay on the horsehair sofa, trying to fall asleep.  
Which wasnÆt easy with the half pitches of Twinkle, twinkle, little star  
echoing  
in the Parlor. ThatÆs the name Jamie gave this particular room, filled  
with  
various pieces of furniture from various times.  
Jamie turned over for the tenth time. It was just no good. He couldnÆt  
get her  
out of his mind. HeÆd close his eyes, and see her dark, elvish features

appear  
 out of the darkness. Black as her hair, and her brown eyes. That  
 softness of  
 her warm lips and breath plagued him. It was safer to think of her as a  
 lass  
 that he argued with from time to time. But now he felt awkward,  
 uncomfortable.  
 Finally he sat up. Scratched his head. "Doctor,ö he said. "WhatÆs  
 wrong wiÆ  
 Zoe?ö he asked.  
 No response. Now the tones of some obscure abstract song issued from  
 the  
 recorder. Only his eyebrows raised in question as he struggled to find  
 the  
 right note.  
 Patiently the young Highlander tried again. Adjusted his kilt and crossed  
 the  
 ornate Persian carpet to where the Doctor sat. "Doctor, whaÆs wrong  
 wiÆ Zoe?ö  
 he repeated. "The wee lass has been acting strange.ö  
 "Since when?ö  
 "Since, well when we left that planet. Where the lassies were uppity.ö  
 "After you gave her that stern spanking?ö  
 "It was jest a wee larruping,ö he said defensively. Jade green eyes fixed  
 on  
 him.  
 "Well, it cured her, didnÆt it?ö  
 "I do admit it was appropriate, under the circumstances,ö admitted the  
 Doctor,  
 peering through the bore of his recorder. Pulling off the mouthpiece, he  
 stuck  
 his finger into the shaft. To check for dust. "Certainly did the trick to  
 shock her out of the Conditioning. But she was subjected to extremely  
 deep  
 trauma. It appears to be affecting her more than I thought.ö  
 "Do ye mean sheÆs sick?ö  
 "Well, not physically. But emotionally. There could be some critical  
 emotional  
 aftereffects.ö  
 "How do ye ken?ö asked Jamie, none the wiser.  
 "Just look at the way you two were arguing.ö  
 "Ah, well, we do ye know.ö  
 "IÆm not referring to your normal bickering. If you recall the episode in  
 the  
 TARDIS Control room, you were at each otherÆs throats.ö  
 "She started it,ö snapped Jamie, hands on his hips.  
 "Her will was warped by the conditioning, Jamie. A whole lifetime of  
 values  
 twisted into BabsÆ ideals. Even ZoeÆs mind might not snap back right

away.ö

"She might never recover?"ö gasped Jamie.

"I wouldn't say that,"ö said the Doctor, looking up at Jamie thoughtfully.

"What do we do?"ö he asked, hands outstretched. He didn't like this at all.

"Stay close to her. Reassure her that we are her friends. Respond to her fears

as if they were real threats.ö

"What are ye saying?"ö

"One of the aftereffects of brainwashing is a struggle to regain one's identity,"ö explained the Doctor. Whipping out his handkerchief, he began to

polish his recorder. "The mind struggles to make sense of events, and scrambles

to find the right set of values.ö

"But surely she can remember right from wrong.ö

"I don't doubt that. But her mind could experience paranoia.ö

"Para what?"ö

"She might begin to see things that don't exist. Fantasize her fears. Translate the world into a fantasy she can understand. But that's part

of the mind healing itself.ö

"Oh. I still don't get it, Doctor. How do we help her fight something in her

mind?"ö

"All we can do is watch and wait, Jamie.ö

"Where are we going?"ö

"I'm paying a visit to an old friend,"ö said the Doctor. He fitted the pieces of

his disassembled instrument back together. "Someone who might be able to treat

Zoe's condition. Or at least offer advice.ö

"When will we arrive, do ye think?"ö

"Oh, Jamie,"ö he sighed. "Don't you know better than to ask me a question like

that?"ö

"Aye, well, wake me when we get there,"ö sighed Jamie. "I'm going to my own bed.

Haven't slept a wink or a decent sleep for days.ö

"You go on, Jamie. I'll wake you if there's any change. I'm going to have a

bit of a thought. Let's see. Perhaps London bridge is falling down.ö

A few sour notes later, he reconstructed the tune to the famous nursery rhyme.

At least it was one that the Highlander had remotely heard of from his past.

Slowly Jamie dragged himself to his room. The Highlander didn't notice the

Doctor looking at him thoughtfully.

Part Three: Inside out

"Doctor! Jamie!" echoed a voice. "Help me!"

Jamie sat boldly upright. A loud scream pierced his ears. "Victoria?" he gasped, still not fully awake.

He realized he was sleeping in his own bed. In the small room he'd adopted in

the TARDIS. The lights were dim. Just how long had he been asleep?

Rubbing his eyes, he yawned. There was nothing but silence. Perhaps he'd been

dreaming of Victoria again. The thought of her made his face crumple with an

aching loss. He'd never been able to tell her.

He glanced at his watch. The thick leather band was still strapped to his wrist. Twenty after ten. PM. Such a thing like consulting a watch had little

meaning to a person traveling outside of time. Jamie had only recently learned

to tell time. A good eight-hour's solid he'd slept. Even though he felt better, it still didn't seem like enough.

Then he remembered. Zoe was ill. Soon they'd arrive on a planet where the

Doctor hoped he could find help.

Slowly, he pressed hands against the mattress. It yielded, almost sucking him

under again. He shook off sleep, and the covers. Jamie reached for his kilt,

automatically wrapping the wool garment around his waist. Next, he put on his

shirt, that he'd thrown over a nearby chair.

A few minutes later he crept down darkened corridors. Strange that the lights

were dim. The Doctor only turned them off when the crew slept. Surely he

didn't leave without telling them.

But he did this sometimes. Creeping out when Zoe and Jamie were fast asleep, on

a private adventure. Then he'd show up suddenly, having saved some society from

the brink of destruction.

The Doctor would have waked him. If they had arrived. At least that's what he

said.

"Jamie! Doctor!" a voice called once more. "Please help me!"

"Zoe!" he gasped. Through the darkened mazes he raced. Where was her room,

again? All he could do was follow her cries. Jamie's boots pounded against a

hard floor.

“IÆm coming, lass!ö he cried. “Hold on!ö  
ZoeÆs yells grew louder. Luckily, his good sense of direction was kicking in.  
Instinctively he remembered the layout of the winding corridors.  
Just what had the Doctor said was wrong with her? Trauma? Mental trauma.  
Paranoia. Such words Jamie hardly ever used in Scotland. Not back in seventeen-forty-five. A whole unused vocabulary had been thrust on him in the last few years.  
He burst through her door, expecting to jump on some assassin. Spun around in the darkness. “All right ye Sassenaches! Come out and fight . . .ö  
“Thank goodness,ö gasped Zoe weakly. She huddled in the small bed, a white ghost under the scant light. Her face looked bone-white with those dark large eyes staring through the gloom.  
“I heard ye scream,ö he said, panting. With more force than necessary he slapped the light panel, casting the room into brightness.  
Zoe squinted, and blinked. Even though the light was dimmer than in the Control room. “Ow! Not so bright!ö  
“Sorry,ö he said, coming over to her. “WhatÆs wrong? It sounded as if someone were attacking ye!ö  
Carefully he sat on the edge of her bed. Sweat beaded on her forehead. Dark hair, normally pulled back into a thick band, hung over her face. That intelligent young face now stared past him as if he didnÆt exist. Brown eyes grew frighteningly large.  
“Och, ye jest had a bad dream, thatÆs all,ö he soothed, taking her hand. Slowly he patted it.  
“It wasnÆt an illusion, Jamie,ö she snapped, pulling her hand away. “I saw something! Something tried to attack me.ö  
“Dinna be daft, lass!ö he scoffed. “How could anyone get in here without the Doctor letting them in? Ye ken heÆs the only one who can turn the key tÆ get in the TARDIS.ö  
“But you reacted as if there was someone ready to attack me,ö she insisted.  
“You must have sensed it too.ö  
“That was jest a reflex,ö he insisted. “Ye ken that I fought at Culloden Muir,

in the past!ö

“WhereÆs the Doctor?ö she asked him, eyes registering him.

“I thought he would come in here, tÆcheck on ye by nau.ö

“I havenÆt seen him.ö

“Ye mean he hasnÆ come in here at all?ö

“IÆve been asleep. How could I know?ö

“Och, heÆs gone and left us again.ö

“He couldnÆt have . . . “ she gasped. White fingers grabbed the edge of her bedspread.

“No I mean that the Doctor sometimes sneaks away, and comes right back. HeÆs

done it before. He said heÆd land on some planet where there was someone who

could get ye some help.ö

“Whatever for? IÆm not sick!ö

Jamie snapped his mouth shut. Then he slowly explained, “Ye said ye werenÆt

feeling well before, when we left that last planet.ö

“Oh, yes. I suppose I must have dozed off. But IÆm feeling fine now.

Just a bit, frightened.ö

Jamie looked at his watch. “Tis rather late. Can I get ye anything? A glass

of water or something?ö

“Please, IÆm parched. But, donÆt be gone too long, will you?ö

“IÆll be back in two shakes.ö

He returned. Zoe was laying on her side, still weak and drawn. Jamie read the

fear in her sleeping frown as she clutched her pillow to her chest. Like a statue she lay, with lips parted slightly.

“WhereÆs the Doctor when ye need him?ö muttered Jamie crossly to himself. Soft

lights in the room bathed her skin. Zoe had long ago taped a pink and purple

veil over the light to mute its stark sterile effect. Soft purple filtered light transformed JamieÆs tartan. The red and yellow of the MacLaren were

painted sick puce. ZoeÆs soft powder blue bedspread appeared deep violet.

“Zoe?ö he said softly, shaking her shoulder.

“Oh,ö she whispered, blinking as he sat on the edge of the bed.

“HereÆs yuir water. Careful nau.ö

She gripped the plastic cup, fumblingly. Even though she insisted she was fine,

somehow she wasnÆt. He gently guided the cup to her mouth.

“ThatÆs it. All down nau. Good.ö

She managed to finish it all. “What did the Doctor say about me?ö

“He well, said that you were suffering from some trauma. From that

correction

or conditioning probe. And that youÆre no yet recovered. HeÆs taking the

TARDIS to a friend who says he can help you.ö

“But IÆm not sick. Just tired.ö

“You dinna look well, Zoe,ö said Jamie. “You look as white as a ghost.ö

With his left hand he touched her forehead, and recoiled. “Och, youÆre as cold

as ice!ö

“I do feel a bit chilly,ö she said, straightening up in the bed. Jamie noticed

the nightgown she wore. Blue feathers spilled over the neckline and cuffs of a

nylon. Jamie didnÆt recognized that it was a 1920's bathrobe borrowed from some

flapper many journeys ago.

“WhereÆs the blasted heat control around here?ö he muttered, standing.

Hastily

he hunted for a thermostat switch.

“Jamie, please stop pacing,ö she sighed. “YouÆre making me dizzy.ö

“Sorry. IÆm jest worried about the Doctor.ö

“Where is he?ö asked Zoe.

“Tell you what. IÆm going to the console room, and checking that scanner thing.

Mebbe if I can see whatÆs outside . . .ö

“Wait, take me along,ö she said, throwing aside her covers.

“I dinna ken if thatÆs all right.ö

“Oh, donÆt be silly,ö she said. Zoe swung her feet around to the edge of the

bed. When Jamie grasped her hand, she managed to stand.

Together they crept into the Console room. Like the corridors, it too was dark.

Nowhere could they see the Doctor. Only the faint emergency lights cast a dim

glow in the room.

“ItÆs funny how all the lights up here are off, and my bedroom lights are working,ö said Zoe.

Carefully Jamie carried a flickering lantern in one hand. Long shadows danced

on the huge walls. Dozens of black crescents covered them, the instant they

entered. Jamie hunted for the light switch in vain.

“Aye, itÆs like that all over the TARDIS. I cannae tell whatÆs wrong.

Tha

Fault locator says thereÆs a . . . something blown.ö

“A circuit?ö she said, helpfully.

“Aye, thaÆs it. But some of the other circuits are still going.ö

“Now which one of these controls activates the scanner?ö she asked.

Jamie immediately flipped a switch. The screen flickered into life. A

strange  
pastel landscape illuminated their faces. Gentle, red sand hills curved  
against  
sherbet green sky. "Och, thatÆs weird," he muttered. "Definitely not  
earth."  
"I donÆt see the Doctor anywhere out there," said Zoe.  
"Well, he wouldnae jest pop out and wave to us."  
"DonÆt you think I know that?" she snapped.  
"ThatÆs strange," muttered the Highlander, shaking his head. "I could  
swear I  
saw some buildings."  
"Jamie!" she cried, gripping his arm. Again she stared past the walls and  
the  
room, into some unknown dimension.  
"What?"  
"The voices, telling me what to do!"  
Zoe clasped hands to her head. "Leave me alone, damn you!" she cried.  
Tried  
not to scream. Strange images swirled and distorted reality. It was as if  
her  
life itself had gone out of focus. "I refuse . . . to let you into my mind!"  
All Jamie saw was Zoe writhing in agony, strangely silently screaming.  
"That does it," he snapped. "IÆm going outside!"  
His hands found the door control. And flipped the simple metal switch.  
"Och,  
whatÆs with this?" he asked. Stubbornly the doors remained shut.  
Again he tried the control. "Come on, you sasanache machine!"  
Desperately he grabbed ZoeÆs arm. Pulled her over toward the door.  
Perhaps if  
they both stood in front of it, the door might open. That is if the Doctor  
forgot to set the infrared sensor to their heat patterns.  
"WhoÆs the heathen coward that wuld strike at a lass wiÆ magic?" he  
shouted, at  
the top of his lungs. For that was the only explanation he could cudgel  
from  
his brain for ZoeÆs silent torment.  
Lifeless, she sagged to the floor. Invisible wires, her lifeÆs support into  
reality, had been snapped. The young Highlander caught her as she  
crumpled.  
Glancing up at the scanner screen though the dark, he noticed the  
sherbet  
landscape. Not a cloud marred the gentle sky with twin suns. Jamie  
scowled.  
For all he knew, this could be an illusion. What kind of hell was Zoe  
experiencing?  
Then the faint humming all around him ceased. Always Jamie could hear  
the  
TARDIS generators ticking away, even when the ship had landed.  
Something very



odd was going on here. Lights that went on in some parts of the ship, while others didn't, or the scanner screen operating while the door wasn't. Carefully he carried her. Luckily she wasn't that heavy. Like a rag doll she lay across his arms, totally limp. Strange coldness spread throughout her body. Jamie bit his lip. He didn't know quite what to do. To make matters worse, the Doctor was nowhere to be found. And they were stuck inside the TARDIS.

Jamie kicked the door open with one foot, balancing Zoe in his hands. Luckily

her light was still on. Then turning sideways, he tried not to bang her legs

against the doorway as he entered. Lowered her onto the bed. Pulled the covers

over her, and tucked them around her body.

Then he sat on the side of the bed. Waited. What else could he do?

Anger rose

in him. How could the Doctor just leave them here, when Zoe might be gravely

ill, possibly dying?

Yet, the Doctor said it was in her mind. Maybe, if he could somehow convince

her she wasn't sick, she'd get better. How on Earth would he do that, when she

was unconscious?

Zoe's eyes flicked open. "Och, guid. Yuir awake," he smiled, relieved.

"I fainted, didn't I," she grumbled. "Just great. Playing the vulnerable female again. However did I get back here?"

"I carried ye. From the Console room."

Zoe blushed. "You really didn't have to, you know."

"What, leave you on that hard, cold floor? Dinna be daft."

"Jamie, what is happening to me?" she asked him. "It was horrible. As if reality itself was twisted . . . I couldn't keep my balance!"

"I cannae tell..."

"It's not like I can explain it, scientifically. I... don't know what was more

frightening. The experience itself, or not being able to explain it!"

"But you'll get better, see!"

"I hope the Doctor's okay," she said, trying to change the subject. He couldn't

understand this strange void in her reasoning. Or could he?

"I'm worried too. He might get into trouble, without me there to keep him out

of it. Just wish there was some way we could get out of here."

"But the Doctor told me that the TARDIS doors can be locked from the

outside in  
 certain circumstances. ItÆs a special emergency procedure.ö  
 “Ye maun we canna get out?ö  
 “Not unless I can figure out whatÆs keeping the control door from  
 working.ö  
 “The Doctor doesnae do things wiÆout a reason,ö said Jamie.  
 “What if thereÆs some greater danger outside, and heÆs trying to  
 protect us!ö  
 cried Zoe. “By shutting us in here.ö  
 “ThereÆs nowt oot there that can get us,ö said Jamie. “No wiÆ the  
 doors locked.  
 Unless . . . ö  
 “Oh, if I could only concentrate long enough to think,ö she winced.  
 “Maybe if I  
 could access the central computer and ring up the infrared codes . . . ö  
 “Dinna try, lass,ö he said softly. “Jest relax. YouÆll get better. I know  
 it.ö Simply he slid his arm around her shoulders.  
 “I feel so helpless,ö she grumbled, drawing her knees up and resting her  
 chin on  
 them. “I hate it.ö  
 “Aye. But thereÆs nothing we ken do nau,ö he said softly, patting her  
 shoulder.  
 “But wait. And I hate waiting, too.ö  
 Zoe chuckled. “ThatÆs something we have in common.ö Jamie felt her  
 snuggling  
 against him. Dare he ask her about a few hours ago?  
 If she wasnÆt well in the head, did that mean it was a fluke? Jamie  
 didnÆt want  
 to think about it. At least now her temperature warmed up. A bit of  
 color  
 crept into her complexion now.  
 “I must look a mess,ö she said.  
 “You look fine to me, lass,ö he said.  
 “DonÆt be silly, Jamie. My hairÆs a mess, IÆm in my nightgown, for  
 heavens  
 sake!ö  
 Then she laughed. “Listen to me, worried about how I look.ö  
 “Ye lasses are all the same. Always worrying about yuir hair and yuir  
 face,ö  
 sighed Jamie.  
 “Oh, stop.ö  
 Beneath the nightgown she felt warm and soft. He dared to clasp her  
 free hand  
 on the counterpane. Felt the pressure of her fingers closing on his. In  
 the  
 silence he felt her heart beating close. A funny thing this silence. Not  
 even  
 the distant humming of the TARDIS was present. Was it footsteps he  
 suddenly

heard?

They clasped arms around each other. Jamie pressed up against her body, just separated from his leg by the blanket. With one hand he slowly reached into his sock, lifting his right leg to do so. He gripped the familiar handle of his dirk.

"Are ye sure no one ken get inside here? Mebbe itÆs the Doctor, coming back.ö

"What if it isnÆt?ö Zoe gasped. "There must be others, with advanced technology that could break in!ö

"Dinnae be daft, Zoe. Ye were the one who said if he locked us in, he locked us in!ö

"How do you know something else might have entered when he left?ö

"If there is someone in here,ö said Jamie, leaping from the bed.

Stepping

lightly on his toes, he positioned himself between the bed and the door.

"HeÆll

no get past me!ö

"I feel so reassured,ö she said, sarcastically. "Ten to one itÆll get us both.ö

For a few minutes, Jamie listened intently. Hunched in a defensive crouch, he

clenched his dirk tightly in his left hand. Every muscle in his body tightened

while he slowly advanced upon the room entrance. Zoe sat rigidly as before.

Only her brown eyes moved back and forth.

Bang!

Zoe gasped, throwing up her hands. Crunching up on the bed, she hugged her

knees nervously.

"Tha does it!ö cried Jamie. "IÆm checking this oot!ö

"Oh, do be careful, Jamie!ö Zoe called after him, after he dashed into the dark hallway.

Nothing happened. Except for the tangible silence. Mere seconds dragged by, agonizingly slow.

"Jamie?ö she called. "WhatÆs going on?ö

No answer came. Just the dark rectangle lurking through the door frame. "If he

would just shut the door,ö she grumbled.

But Jamie would never leave her in danger, intentionally. Would he?

Men are unnecessary. Such time wasted on foolishness such as dating.

"No!ö she snapped. "Men and women need each other.ö

You are a fool. DonÆt you see how they hold you back. When danger

arises,  
youÆd just get in the way.  
“No. The Doctor has good reason to leave me behind. When he knows  
that my  
education didnÆt include offensive tactics.ö  
Still the voices persisted. Answering her every objection. Two faces  
angrily  
pressing against the curved glass of an enclosed space. Smoke rising  
around  
her. Walls rising in her mind to block out any objection.  
Men were obsolete, an obstacle. They made no sense, they criticized  
women.  
They were rude, dirty and violent. A waste of time.  
DonÆt the drones just eat and laze around in the hive? While the  
females wait  
on them hand and foot. They only exist as living recepticals for sperm.  
“Jamie and the Doctor are different,ö she argued. Even though time and  
again  
they rescued her. The Doctor respected her knowledge. It was fun to  
compete  
with him, to laugh at his gentle teasing. Or verbally spar with Jamie.  
Even  
when he was pompous. Nine times out of ten he was wrong.  
YouÆre just a fixture to them. A damsel to be rescued. When do they  
ever  
respect your experience, your knowlege?  
It felt like the light was being choked from the refuge around her. Both  
sides  
of the issue crashed before her. Lights flickered out as the hum of the  
TARDIS  
suddenly halted. A pitch black curtain dropped before her vision.  
Again, she could hear the minute sounds in her head. Blood pounding in  
her  
temples. Hissing neurons fired in her brain. Muscle fibers stretched  
taut.  
Thumping sounded. Footsteps echoed. In pace with her heart. Racing  
faster,  
and faster.  
Zoe clamped hands to her head. They had both left her alone. To face a  
menace  
far worse than any she could scientifically explain. That thumping of her  
heart  
grew louder. She could pace the time with each beat. Eighty times a  
minute.  
No. It was coming from outside her body. Lub-dub, lub-dub against her  
ribcage.  
Against a solid floor. Thump, thump. Thump, thump.  
Hands grasped her arms, and she struggled against them. “Let me go!ö  
she

screamed, as she wriggled against a steel grip.

"Zoe, itÆs me," cried a familiar voice, with a Scottish accent. "Whist ye, stop fighting!"

"YouÆre just holding me back! Like you always do!" she cried.

"WhatÆtre ye saying? Yuir fair near freezing!"

Achingly tight his fingers closed. On her arms blood vessels spattered into

bruises. She dug her fingernails into rock-hard biceps, pushing with every

ounce of strength. Only to feel her energy slip away.

Then she blinked hard. The room was light once more. Glanced up into the

concerned face of a young man. Total puzzlement wrote across his face. She

shivered. Why was she so cold? With the comforter and blankets piled high on

her bed, she should be roasting hot.

"Jamie . . . what the . . ."

"Hush nau, itÆs all right," he said, pulling the blankets around her.

Tightly

he hugged her. "There, there."

It was a funny scene: A Scots highlander slipped his arm around a girl in a

futuristic gown. Also wrapped around her was his other hand that still clutched

his dirk.

"I feel, so stupid being so scared," she chattered.

"ThereÆs nowt outside that made that noise."

"J-just, donÆt disappear again," she said, eyes tearing up despite her efforts

to stop.

"IÆm here. I will nae run away again."

Zoe rested her chin on his shoulder. By glancing over it, she saw a flickering

lantern lighting her room. The lights really had gone out here, as well.

Perhaps someone did attack the TARDIS, and cause some of the circuits to blow.

"Jamie, what happened to the lights?"

"They all went oot, all over the TARDIS. Jest the emergency ones are on. It

doesnae happen very often."

He must have brought the lantern with him when he returned, she realized. She

felt the strong hard muscles in his arms holding her reassuringly.

"It, it was another attack," she said, forcing back tears.

"How?" he demanded, gripping his dirk tightly.

"I, I was hearing voices in my head. Saying things like I heard when I was put

in that conditioning chamber. Oh, listen to me. I must be going crazy.ö  
Maybe weÆre both going daft, Jamie thought. He looked at her,  
shivering still  
against his shirt. "ItÆs no as daft as ye think,ö he said. "I was thinking,  
before, that someone might have some kind of power. ThatÆs attacking  
us thru  
the TARDIS walls. I know it probably sounds daft tÆ ye . . .ö  
"No, it doesnÆt,ö she said, resting both her hands on his shoulders. She  
faced  
him now. "A person with psychic powers could be attacking us, yes.ö  
"But whatever must be affecting you must be affecting me as well,  
otherwise I  
wouldnae be hearing things too.ö  
"Do you suppose, that it could kill us? Drive us mad?ö  
"I dinna ken, lass,ö he admitted. His distinctive nose and strong  
cheekbones  
were painted gold in the flickering lantern light. Strangely soft and  
feminine  
for one so masculine. That scarf added a strange sensitive touch to a  
strongly  
muscled neck. She found her fingers playing with the scarf tips.  
"But thereÆs no one IÆd rather go with,ö she said softly, turning her  
head to  
face him. "Thanks for putting up with me.ö  
"I cannae jest leave you alone in the TARDIS.ö  
"IÆd be fine. ö  
"Even if I cuild open the door and search for the Doctor. What  
if ye pass out again?ö  
"Honestly, I feel like a princess out of a storybook right now. And I  
donÆt  
even read fiction. DonÆt be so worried about me!ö  
"I cannae help but worry about ye,ö he admitted, voice now to a whisper.  
Lips  
were inches from her ear. "ThatÆs why I didnae want ye coming wiÆ us  
in the  
first place.ö  
"Really,ö she asked, eyebrows lowered. Her mind moved back in time to  
what heÆd  
said on the rocket:  
ItÆs like this. You have yuir world, and the Doctor anÆ me haÆ ours.  
HeÆd said this, shaking her small hand. At her doubting puzzled face,  
he  
stopped. And tried again.  
Look, youÆve been, well . . . he stopped once more, as if hunting for the  
right  
words to say. And then heÆd turned and said goodbye, not looking back.  
"I thought you just didnÆt want to be bothered by me hanging around.ö  
"Tha wasnae why I said what I did, Zoe.ö  
"Were you worried that IÆd get in the way?ö

"No . . . ò he said, looking a bit hurt. "I did say that IÆd protect ye if ye got into trebble.ò

"Then why didnÆt you want me to come along?ò

" It was jest . . . difficult to leave,ò he said, struggling to put the elusive feelings into words. He was so afraid of saying the wrong things. Zoe guessed what he was trying to say.

"Look what happened,ò she laughed. "You canÆt get rid of me that easily, James

Robert McCrimmon.ò

For a moment he traced back. Alone on a cold northern beech he saw Victoria.

Eyes red from crying the night before, sheÆd said she must go her own way. Into

her own world, out of the DoctorÆs and his. HeÆd never been able to tell her

how he felt. When the moment came, he lost his nerve.

She wasnÆt Victoria. No one could ever replace her. Jamie slipped that memory

away, cherishing it for its own sake. ZoeÆs features formed before his eyes,

now.

Slowly, he curled his left arm around her shoulders, and pulled the astrophysicist to himself. This hand still gripped the dirk, but he didnÆt even notice he was still holding it. Somehow his warriorÆs instinct was prompting him to keep his guard. Propped up on his right arm, he pressed lips to

hers. He trembled as he prayed she wouldnÆt hit him. Zoe relaxed against him,

sliding her arms around his neck. Down the curve of her back and waist he felt

his left hand pass. Small fingertips worked their way through his hair.

Warmth was returning to her body. Wonder of wonders. The hand that wrapped

round his neck slid down around his shoulders. Almost magically, Zoe worked the

tightness out of his muscles with her small fingers. He tried not to burst out

laughing. It felt soothing. No one in his time knew how to touch like this.

Now he moved further onto the twin bed. He sat on his bent knee

with his left leg balanced up alongside her leg still under the covers.

Now he

felt her hand massaging its way down past his waist. Despite his warm wool

kilt, he shivered. Slowly he released his grip on the dirk, and didnÆt even

notice as it dropped to the bed behind Zoe.

He drew his knees up under himself as he struggled not to rest his feet

on her  
 bed. It seemed a sin to dirty her bedspread. However, the astrophysicist  
 was  
 one step ahead of him. Taking his left leg, she balanced it across her hip.  
 Zoe pulled at the laces of his boots. Both of them thumped tonelessly  
 onto her  
 bedroom floor. She kneaded his foot, right through his woolen sock.  
 The  
 Highlander gasped and sighed as a soporific sensation shot up his leg  
 and into  
 his spine. What was she doing, with those small finger movements that  
 could  
 provide such pleasure?  
 "Is this some of yuir fine scientific education?ö he asked her.  
 "Massage and acupressure. Works quite well to relieve tension.ö  
 "How on Earth did ye ken that, lass?ö he teased her. Now he stretched  
 out,  
 laying on his side with his head leaning on his bent arm.  
 "When you, er kissed me. I sensed a massive amount of tension.  
 Especially in  
 your trapezius muscle.ö  
 "Eh?ö  
 "Your back. It felt solid and rigid, like stone . . .ö  
 "IÆm supposed to be solid an rigid. WiÆ all that rushing around . . . ö he  
 protested. "Chasin Ice Warriors an Daleks.ö  
 "IÆm not talking about your overall musculature. What I mean is your  
 physiological response. "  
 "Ach, stop talkign like a dictioinary and get some sleep lass," Jaime  
 nudged  
 her.  
 "Thank you... for checking on me," Zoe said softly. Rising from the bed,  
 Jaime  
 pulled up a chair and sat firmly on it.  
 "I'll jest stay here, till yer asleep..." he promised.

#### Part Four: The Perfect Remedy

At his side was an old and dear friend. The Doctor prayed that heÆd  
 help Zoe.  
 Dr. Psimion was an expert in psychic traumas. At least that was what  
 sheÆd  
 claimed.  
 "DonÆt worry,ö she assured him. Her long violet smock swept the  
 TARDISÆ glossy  
 floor. "After what you told me, there are several options available for  
 Zoe.ö  
 "I hated having to leave her in there, with the door locked.ö  
 "You did the right thing.ö  
 "But I had to fool poor Jamie too. He must be worried sick about me.ö  
 "From what it sounds like, Jamie is capable.ö



"But heÆs not exactly the best medical person," sighed the Doctor.

"HeÆs from  
eighteenth-century Scotland."

"Does he have strong feelings for Zoe?"

"HeÆs rather protective of her. And most women for that matter. Apart  
from

that I donÆt know."

They both stood in the TARDIS console room. Dr. Psimeon brushed a  
lock of

silver hair out of her face. The Doctor threw the lights back on.

"Jamie? Zoe?" he called out, down the hall. "IÆm back. EverythingÆs  
all right

now. IÆve gotten help for Zoe."

"Doctor, am I glad to see you," said Jamie. He came rapidly through the  
door,

dressed in a kilt and loose button-up shirt. Carefully he put down the  
plate of

food concentrate heÆd been eating. As usual he rolled up the sleeves to  
his

elbow. Nodded to the new arrival. "Pleased to meet ye, maÆam."

"Ah, youÆre Jamie McCrimmon. The DoctorÆs told me all about you,  
and your

friend Zoe."

"Aye, well, then ye know whatÆs wrong wiÆ her?"

"I have some very good ideas."

"How is Zoe?" asked the Doctor, wringing his hands.

"Zoe," repeated Jamie, fumbling for words. "Ye mean, how is she?"

"Out with it."

"Well, she cried out once or twice. I jest gave her some water, and  
stayed with

her. Like ye said to."

"You didnÆt bleed her, did you?"

"Och, no," said Jamie, shaking his head. "No fer what she had. I . . . jest  
kept her warm. SheÆs sleeping back in her room nau."

"Very good Jamie," sighed the Doctor, looking much relieved. "IÆm  
sorry to have

locked you both in the TARDIS, but the good Dr. Psimeon said it was  
necessary to

keep Zoe under isolation."

"She wasnae in isolation," protested Jamie. "She was wi me."

"Take me to her."

As Jamie anxiously looked on, Dr. Psimeon examined the sleeping young  
woman.

Like a crusader on a tombstone she lay there, hands folded. Using an old  
stethoscope, the woman listened to ZoeÆs heart.

"Strong and steady. Good flush to the skin, for a human. Body  
temperatureÆs a

steady 38 degrees Celsius. Healthy."

The Doctor nodded. "ThatÆs a relief."

"Also, I detect a high concentration of hormonal activity. Not exactly unusual

for what imbalances existed before.ö

"But what about her mind?ö asked Jamie, wringing his hands and biting his lip.

Psimeon placed her hands on either side of ZoeÆs head. Shut her own eyes, and went rigid.

The young Highlander felt the DoctorÆs hand resting on his shoulder.

"ItÆs all

right, Jamie. I think Zoe is fine.ö

"WhatÆs she doing?ö

"Looking into her mind.ö

"Och, does that mean sheÆll see all what happened?ö

"Dr. Psimeon is nothing but discreet. Anything in ZoeÆs mind will remain

private.ö

He didnÆt hear JamieÆs silent sigh of relief.

A few tense minutes later, the psychotherapist opened her eyes. "All perfectly

normal. Any evidence of trauma has healed itself. She underwent quite an

ordeal,ö reported Psimeon.

"Does that mean Zoe will recover?ö asked the Doctor. "As I described it, that

conditioning did quite a job on her memory.ö

"I must commend Jamie McCrimmon on his effective treatment,ö smiled Dr. Psimeon

mysteriously.

"Och, what did I do?ö

"That spanking was quite effective. Primitive, yet effective.ö

"But what went wrong?ö asked the Doctor. "I thought that reversed the conditioning.ö

"Initially it brought her out of the conditioning, yes. But exposing Zoe to male-female conflict so soon after that experience traumatized her sense of

herself. She required time to live through her fantasies while her mind healed

itself.ö

"So I was right,ö smiled the Doctor. "Hurrah for good old-fashioned bed rest.ö

Jamie swallowed hard, and crossed his fingers. He was feeling a bit faint. Within his mind he felt gossamer fingers caressing. \*I wonÆt tell him, it said.

That is between you and her.

"Aye, well thank you,ö he sighed aloud.

"Whatever is the matter, Jamie?ö the Doctor asked him. "You seem nervous about

something.ö

"ItÆs jest that . . . Zoe and I had an argument. And IÆm jest hoping . . .  
"She will forget the last few hours," said Dr. Psimeon. "And remember  
who her  
friends are."

"Aye, friends," muttered the Scot, dragging his boot on the floor. No use  
crying over spilt milk. "WeÆll always have the TARDIS, I suppose."

"Why so glum, Jamie? ZoeÆs going to be quite all right."

"If ye don mind, I must be getting something tÆ eat. IÆm fair starved."

"Of course, lad," muttered the Doctor, perplexed at his companionÆs  
behavior.